DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 049 463 48 AL 002 790

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TITLE Specifications for the Design of a Test of Knowledge of Foreign Cultural Patterns. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. Center for Research on Language and Language Behavior.
SPONS AGENCY Institute of International Studies (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO BR-9-7740
PUB DATE 31 Jan 71
CONTRACT OEC-0-9-097740-3743(010)
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Patterns, *Cross Cultural Training, *Foreign Culture, *Second Language Learning, *Test Construction
IDENTIFIERS World View

ABSTRACT

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ED049463

(3) Title III Sec 609, NDEA
PH 48 Bureau # 9-7748

January 31, 1971

FINAL REPORT

Contract No. OEC-0-9-097740-3743(014)

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AL 002 790

ED049463

SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE DESIGN OF A TEST OF KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN CULTURAL PATTERNS[1]

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The point is made that, though foreign language teachers often have among their goals the knowledge by students of the unique patterns of thought, behavior and attitudes that characterize members of a target culture, there have been few systematic attempts to evaluate these outcomes. A general design for such a test is suggested, including three classes of items. Class A items are designed to measure the student's knowledge of how to conduct oneself in a variety of everyday situations common to the target culture; Class B items probe the student's understanding of general patterns of social interaction that are common to many specific situations; and Class C items test how successfully the student can adopt temporarily the world-view of the target culture. In general, the student must first identify the ways in which target-culture norms are being violated in a recorded episode, then describe alternate moves which would correct these violations.

This paper first makes an argument for the need for a test which would reliably assess the degree of success a native of one culture would be likely to attain in being accepted as an "understanding friend" by natives of another culture. In order for this to happen, it is urged, the visitor must be knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, the unique patterns of behavior, thought and attitude that are a natural part of the every-day experience of members of the second culture. In short, he must be able to assume, if only temporarily, their Weltanschauung. Secondly, the main body of the paper is an exposition of the design features of such a test of "acculturation" and some strategies that could be used to produce it. This discussion will be on the most general level that is compatible with making a series of concrete proposals, because the goal is a set of specifications that will be equally applicable to the development of a test involving any two cultures.

Most teachers of foreign languages probably include among their goals the fostering of an appreciation of the culture whose language they teach. It must be admitted, however, that often this goal does not loom very large in the total scheme of things, the complexity of acquiring the phonology, syntax and lexicon of a second language being what it is. Indeed, it is often thought that sufficient knowledge and skills can be acquired through occasional brief discussions or descriptions of specific aspects of the target culture. For example,

"Just as accuracy in phonology is best acquired as an incidental by-product of the learning of actual conversations, and as syntax and morphology are best learned not by analysis but by imitation and practice, in the same way knowledge of culture is best imparted as a corollary or an obbligato to the business of language learning [Brooks, Nelson. Language and language learning. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1964, p. 89]." With this point of view, it is not surprising that language teachers seldom make any systematic efforts to test their students for the degree to which they have acquired a knowledge of the target culture, as distinct from its language. This probably also accounts for the fact that, so far as could be determined, there have been few efforts to develop such a test. There seems to be an implicit espousal of the Whorfian notion that thinking patterns are unavoidably tied to language forms and usage; hence, acquisition of the language more or less automatically imparts the most basic and pervasive aspects of the culture. This may, or may not, be true. Suffice it to say that so far it has not been demonstrated with any great rigor. Another factor that may have contributed to the paucity of tests in this area is the necessity for test forms that are unconventional, if we are to really assess the student's knowledge of behavioral patterns typical of a given culture. Almost by definition, this requires the use of carefully prepared videotape or film for the presentation of many of the test items--a task which has yet to be undertaken.

At least at the lower levels of sophistication, it should be possible to acquire a "feel" for a culture even in the absence of any great familiarity with its language. And while it is undoubtedly true that the average college student who fulfills the standard four-semester foreign language requirement really has only a very tenuous command of the language, it is entirely possible for him to acquire a fairly deep knowledge of the thought/attitude/behavior patterns of a culture, in that time--if instruction allows him to use his native language in the process. Thoughts, attitudes and behavior are, or can be, language independent. "It seems always to be possible to 'name' a category that falls within our experience though we may not have a word for the category [Brown, Roger. Words and things. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958, p. 234]." In other words, any thought or other internal experience of which human beings are capable can be expressed in any language--though it must be admitted that the ease with which it can be expressed will vary greatly. The result is that it should be possible to test "degree of acculturation" independently of language acquisition--at least up to a point. What that point is, and how we are to know when we reach it, has not yet been determined.

In addition, it is clear that cultural and language boundaries do not always coincide (Brown, 1958)--nor is there any special reason why they should, since the criteria used to define culture areas and language areas do not exactly correspond. For the foregoing reasons, it would appear that a valid and reliable test of acculturation could

make a significant contribution to the assessment of foreign language teaching. But its possible utility goes beyond the foreign language course. The news media are very efficient at keeping us informed of happenings almost anywhere in the world. What is missing are the varying meanings and interpretations placed on those events by members of other cultures. We just don't see things in their frame of reference. But surely one of the qualities of the educated man is just this capacity. Hence it would appear that any college curriculum which takes as its object the education of "the whole man" would find use for the kind of test being proposed.

Design features of the test

In order to serve the functions outlined above, a test of acculturation would need to have certain characteristics. First, student performance on the test must be as independent as possible of second language competence. This, in turn, implies that the use of the test is not restricted to foreign language courses. While there does not seem to be any such courses offered at present--at least not as a "general education" component of a liberal arts curriculum--the development of such a test would help define the appropriate domain for courses in one's native language that might carry titles like "Studies in French (Italian, German, etc.) culture". Second, the criteria that would be used to establish the validity of the test would be the judgments of bilingual natives of the target culture. These judgments would be called for at various points in the development of the test--they will be identified at the appropriate places. It is understood, of course, that since the every-day, highly overlearned patterns of thought and behavior of one's native culture are likely to operate almost unconsciously, the advice and guidance of a cultural anthropologist would be sought. It is very difficult for the writer to identify those components or ideas or values that put a unique and defining stamp on his own culture. However, anthropologists are equipped by their training to seek and obtain exactly these kinds of information.

Third, the test might well contain items that require, for their most appropriate answers, a working knowledge of the national history of the target culture. However, such items would be carefully selected to reflect only the kinds of historical background material of which the average citizen of the culture would be aware. For example, practically every American knows that this country was once a British colony, that it was almost permanently divided in two by the agony of the Civil War, that most of our black population consists of descendants of slaves imported from Africa, and that the original European settlements were located on the Atlantic coast followed by a population drift toward the west. These, and similar, pieces of information certainly contribute to the self-image of the native American. It follows that if one is to understand the world-view of the Frenchman, German, Italian, Russian, etc. similar knowledge is necessary. Two sources of such information spring to mind. One is the set of natives of the target culture, who will be serving as consultants on the project, and the other is the public press of the target country.

Fourth, it will be necessary to establish the proper levels of reliability, internal consistency and validity in the test. This would require the participation by an expert in test construction. It seems most appropriate to consider the test an "assessment" as distinct from a "prediction" instrument, in that judgments of validity would be based on demonstrations of the representativeness of the test items when seen in the context of the target culture. The technical aspects of the test will be described in greater detail later in the paper.

Fifth, since a test of any reasonable length can only sample certain elements of a culture, care must be taken to make sure that the sample consists of those elements which are seen by natives as important to the definition of the culture. This implies the consistent use of a contrastive analysis technique which would serve to make particularly salient those classes of components on which the first and second cultures differ markedly--and ones in which students would be most likely to make the most egregious mistakes.

Sixth, the test would be designed to determine whether students could correctly carry out two kinds of performance. One would consist of the identification in a visually presented item of the correctness of a model's behavior (using the standards of natives of the target culture as criterion). The other would be the verbal specification by the student of the changes in the model's behavior that would be necessary to be fully acceptable to natives. Note that the student is not to be asked to perform in the appropriate manner--he is simply to describe the proper behavior. There are three reasons for this. First, actual performance represents a level of sophistication that might be unrealistic to expect under most circumstances. Second, in most instances, the proper setting for the appropriate performance would be difficult to arrange. And lastly, in the interests of greatest utility, it is desirable that the test be scorable by non-natives of the target culture.

Seventh, test items should be as realistic as possible. This means that if the item deals, for instance, with a chance encounter on a street corner in the target country, every effort would be made to give the depicted event a "candid" quality. In general, items would consist of three general classes: specific everyday events (like boarding a bus or greeting a business acquaintance); examples of extremely wide-spread patterns of behavior (such as how to show respect or manifest competitiveness); and various aspects of the culturally-bound world-view of natives of the culture (such as the qualities of the "ideal man" or woman, or common folklore). This last might be considered equivalent to asking the student to "think" like a member of the target culture.

Technical aspects of test construction

Most test items will be records of behavioral events involving interactions of various kinds between young adults who are members of a given culture and who are essentially monolingual on the one hand, and natives of the target culture on the other. The settings will be clearly those of the target culture; the records will consist of videotapes, films, audio tapes, and sequences of slides or still photographs. Some of the models who appear in the test items will have had minimal contact with the target culture, others will be relatively familiar with it. The kinds of interactions that will be depicted in the test items will be those which have been found through anthropological study and contrastive analysis to be important in the target culture--important in the sense that violations of the social norms elicit strong reactions, and in which the norms are sufficiently different from those of the first culture that the probability of such violations is high. The models will not be expected to speak the target language--at least with any fluency. The actual interactions that will be used will be chosen from the general classes to be briefly described in the next section of this paper. In some instances, the language used (or attempted, on the part of the first-culture models) may be that of the target culture; in others, it may be the language of the first culture; and in some items, the language component of the interaction may be suppressed. The choice among these will depend, in each instance, on the distraction value of the verbal input; the focus of attention should be the behavioral (non-verbal) components of the situations.

After a student sees a test item, he will be asked to make two responses. The first will call for a judgment of the degree to which the (first-culture) model in the test item is obeying the relevant norms of the target culture; the second will ask him to specify, in those cases where a judgment of "norm violation" was made, how the model would have to change his behavior to conform to the norms. Both responses would be written. A group of bilingual target-culture natives would then serve as judges of the accuracy of perception of norm violation, and of the efficacy of suggested remedies. They would establish four categories of suggested remedies--ranging from those which would result in the model being seen as sympatico by target-culture natives, to those which would only make matters worse. Sets of responses which were placed in each of the four categories will constitute a pool of "representative answers" which could be used thereafter by any intelligent speaker of the language in which the answers are written to score students' responses. This is the scoring device used in the Stanford-Binet intelligence test.

Another group of test items would take a different form. The purpose of these items would be to probe the student's ability to "think like" a native of the target culture. "Thinking like" is

here defined as the appropriate reference by the student to the kinds of facts, stereotypes, beliefs, folklore, mores, arguments, references to national character or history, attitudes and values that are used by target-culture natives in responding to some standard input. The nature of these items is described more fully elsewhere in this paper. They can be presented in either pictorial or verbal form to the student, and he would be asked to respond "as target-culture natives would." AGain the response would be written--in the student's native language. Again also bilingual target-culture natives would judge how well the student represented the national character of the target culture. Categories of answers would be established and used in future scoring, as described in the preceding paragraph.

A large pool of test items would be constructed, with the aim of developing two parallel forms of the test, having equal means and standard deviations of scores. The two forms could then be used interchangeably as pre- and post-tests of degree of acculturation to a given target culture. Reliability will be determined by correlating the two test forms with each other.

After the test item pool is constructed, the next step is the choice of a "standardizing" population for establishing norms of scores. This population would consist of a group of natives of the target culture (who would be expected to make near-perfect scores on the test, and thus supply a kind of "acculturation standard" against which all student scores would be judged), and a group of first-culture natives who are completely naive with respect to the cultural norms of the target culture. The members of the standardizing population would then be administered the test. With all clues to the cultural background of the writer removed, each answer will be evaluated by a group of bilingual target-culture natives serving as judges according to the plan described earlier. These judges will, of course, not be the same individuals that took the test. One result of this procedure will be the determination of the amount of variability of response to a given situation that is allowable in the target culture.

Classes of test items

Class A test items will be designed to assess the student's knowledge of the (target-culture) social norms which are relevant to various specific, everyday situations. These are instances of human interaction that probably occur in some form in every society. It is not implied here that these are the only interactions that would be sampled; the actual items used in any given test would reflect judgments of natives of the target culture that the depicted events are common in the society, and that they elicit fairly clear norms of "proper" behavior. This proposal amounts to a broadening of the suggestions made by Cooper that language testing itself needs to be differentiated to determine not only whether the student has attained control of the classical, textbook version of a second language, but whether he responds appropriately to contextual cues so that he knows what to say, to whom and under which

circumstances. (Cooper, Robert L. An elaborated language testing model. Problems in Foreign Language Testing. Special Issue No. 3 of Language Learning, August, 1968.) A short list of some typical kinds of events to be sampled follows:

1. How and what to eat, with friends at home, and in public. Each society more or less prescribes its typical foods and its norms of "table manners", the special character of each meal, preferred seating arrangements, the kinds of conversation considered appropriate and the time of day that each meal is expected.

2. How and when "bathroom-boudoir" functions are handled. Many cultures have rather rigid rules governing the elimination of body wastes, cleaning the body and face, grooming the hair, dressing and accepted standards of cleanliness and sanitation.

3. Procedures for using public conveyances and housing; for gaining access to and behaving appropriately at sports and artistic events. Does one queue up to board a bus or train? How are tickets (or their equivalents) obtained? Does one bargain about the price? In occupying temporary (rented) housing, what expectations does the landlord have about your behavior? What can you expect from fellow tenants? How does one express approval of or dissatisfaction at the performers' efforts at sports or theatrical events?

4. How to behave as a guest in a private home. How does one relate to family members on the basis of sex and age? What, if any, family activities are not open to the guest? Is the guest expected to help with the household chores? Which ones? To which family members, if any, should one offer gifts as expressions of gratitude?

5. How to conduct business transactions. Every society probably exchanges, barters or sells goods and services of various kinds among its members. It would be well to know whether one is being discourteous (or naively gauche) by not haggling over prices. Cultures may well have quite different definitions of "dishonesty", "integrity" and "contract violation". Is personal bribery a regular mode of operation? It is difficult for a stranger to know what kinds of business transactions are illegal.

6. Traffic conditions: How does one survive and get about? How does vehicular traffic affect pedestrians? What are the general rules governing "right of way"? What is likely to happen if a vehicle operated by a stranger hurts someone or damages property? What are the equivalents of traffic lights, road signs, crosswalks, safety islands, parking meters, traffic tickets, hitchhiking?

7. Greetings and friendly exchanges. How do friends meet, converse briefly and take their leave? What are the appropriate topics of small talk? To illustrate the conceptual processes involved in constructing such items, this topic is explored in somewhat greater detail than the

preceding. This item requires the use of a motion picture sequence; it calls for specification by a target-culture native of many subtle cues that must be perceived and correctly interpreted. Environmental variables that might affect what occurs include the distance between the individuals, the population density of the micro-environment, special physical conditions like noise or darkness, the nature of the setting (social or professional), and elapsed time since the last greeting was exchanged between the individuals involved. There are also interpersonal conditions that could affect the event, such as the relative social standing of the two, the nature of the relationship between them (personal, professional, business), the individual initiating the exchange, and the sexes of the people involved (if this is especially important, perhaps two episodes will be needed rather than one). The conversation can be in the student's native language, but the topics used, the mode of behavior and the sequence of events would follow the norms of the target culture. Particular attention would be paid to hand, arm, body and head movement, facial expression, distance and general stance of the participants. It will be necessary, in addition, to supply sufficient context (events occurring before and after) the interaction. All of these things, and perhaps a great many more must be attended to, because it would obviously be possible for a stranger to err in any of these ways.

Class B test items will be designed to assess the student's knowledge of ubiquitous patterns of behavior in the target culture--patterns that cut across all the categories of events sampled by the Class A items. Brief comments and questions on several such patterns follow:

1. Patterns of courtesy, variations thereof, and signals for using the variations. Many subtle problems are possible here--what is considered appropriately polite in responding to one class of people might be seen as mockery when directed to another class. Are patterns of politeness tied to sex, age, social class? Are they tied to particular kinds of situations? Is the same act or gesture or phrase always polite or is it situationally dependent?

2. How friendships are formed. Do they grow out of joint membership in school, labor union, club or professional organization? Are there clear stages in the development of a friendship and a prescribed sequence? How is friendship demonstrated? Does a native typically have many or few relationships that he calls "friendships"?

3. The codification of heterosexual relations. Is there a double moral standard? In ordinary social interactions, how much and what kinds of initiative are taken by males and females? What are the formalities of "dating" between unmarried people? What is the attitude toward homosexuality? How much physical/sexual contact is considered acceptable between adolescents? between unmarried adults? How much public display of affection is there?

4. How and when interpersonal competition is manifested. There is great variability among societies with respect to the importance of interpersonal competition. How much competitive spirit is channeled into inter-group relations? Is competition reserved for certain areas of activity--like sports? Is personal competition between members of two different social classes acceptable? In what way, if any, does competition between two persons color the rest of their relationship?

5. Patterns of dress. How much variability is there in what is considered acceptable clothing for a given occasion? How rapidly do styles change? Do patterns of dress vary between social classes? between rural and urban living?

6. Who and what draws respect. Are there aspects of the national heritage that are held in sincere respect? What is commonly the basis for respect being shown--to individuals--age, social position, political power, physical strength, artistic creativity, intellectual achievements, wealth and possessions? This and other Class B items are probably best presented on videotape or motion picture film, made to look as authentic and "candid" as possible. To illustrate how they might be constructed, a somewhat more detailed analysis of this item is offered. First, it is clear that the matter of showing respect has two components--identification of the cues that signal the event, object or person as one to be respected, and knowledge of appropriate "respecting" behaviors. If the event in question has certain ritualistic properties, it may be necessary to know something of its historical background; this may also be true of public offices, where the holder of the office receives respect by virtue of his position. In the latter case, also, a working knowledge of the political system would be helpful. It is probable that the guidance of a cultural anthropologist will be required to determine with any assurance the combinations of factors (like age, political power, wealth) that characteristically draw respect. If it is the case that certain qualities are generally venerated wherever they occur, the task of identifying the proper objects of respect may be somewhat simplified. To be sure, however, that the student is making his discriminations on the correct basis, several instances sharing the common quality but differing substantively in other ways must be presented. Some cues that might prove useful would include an obvious change in roles (such as when a man dons a judge's robes and assumes the dominant position in a courtroom), situational factors such as maintained distance from a respected object or person or the use of special language (such as Japanese honorifics, or certain titles or intonation contours). In each case, just as in the Class A items, the behavior of the model representing the student's culture would be judged for appropriateness by the student, and, where necessary, corrective measures would be specified.

Class C test items will be designed to assess the student's ability to "think like" a native of the target culture, as the term was defined earlier. In many instances, it is expected that the item will be presented

in written form, and will call for a written response. The principal reason for this is that written presentation and response will allow a student a little more time for thought and for assuming the "world view" of another culture--a difficult thing at best. If, however, it were considered desirable to test the student's facility at this kind of performance, rather than his (simpler) ability, some of the items could be made situational and recorded on film, and would then call for an immediate oral response. This is a decision that probably could best be made in implementing the goals of a particular test. It is important to note that how a Class C task is presented to the student is an important factor in determining how sophisticated his answer is. For example, the first type of item discussed in the following list deals with a knowledge of which topics of conversation are taboo in the target culture. It is a simple matter to ask the student to list these topics but (assuming that such a list was supplied him at some point in his learning) a correct answer would say more about his ability to recall lists of items (in his native language) than it would about his acculturation. The proper form for this kind of item may well be the kind of role-playing episode used with Class A and B items. In considering a test of the kind being discussed here it is extremely important to be sure that the kind of performance actually elicited by an item represents the kind of knowedge or skill that is really desired. This correspondence is not automatic, but must be designed into the test--indeed into the instructional system as a whole. Below is a list of some of the kinds of knowledge that might be considered components of the overall disposition to think like a member of another culture.

1. Topical taboos. There may well be common expressions in the student's native language that make reference to topics that are taboo in the target culture. This is often due to the connotative connections between words--which may be very difficult to anticipate without a fairly thorough knowledge of the target language. Since we are not assuming any substantial command of the language, considerable care will be required here. Conversely, the student could find direct equivalents of some common acceptable expressions in the target language to be offensive to members of his culture. This means he must control his own emotional reactions and interpret the utterances in the proper conceptual framework. It would be appropriate to test the student on items of both kinds.

2. Prestige hierarchy of vocations. It is not necessarily true that every society attaches the same value ranking to vocations like teacher, lawyer, politician, nurse, businessman, etc., but it is the case that anyone who understands the culture will be aware of the values that are assigned. As pointed out earlier, a simple listing by the student would be insufficient; items must be constructed that will place the student (by proxy) in a situation in which he must make the necessary discrimination, or which will portray members of the

target culture in interaction, and which will require the student to explain the patterns that emerge in terms of this attitudinal hierarchy.

3. Qualities of the "ideal" man or woman. Every culture glorifies certain personal qualities, and it behooves a student who would understand a given culture to know what they are, and to be able to recognize them in operation, an item evaluating this knowledge could take an interesting form. For example, the student could be presented with a description (or a film clip) of a man who has been chosen as "teacher/salesman/community worker/ politician of the year" in his own culture and be asked to predict how high he would place in a similar competition in the target culture, when viewed in a given context of other entrants.

4. Attitudes toward and stereotypes of the student's culture as held by target-culture natives. It is very difficult to accept such attitudes and stereotypes of one's own culture--there is the immediate feeling that "we are being misinterpreted". An interesting way of determining how aware the student is of such dispositions would be to ask him to write the section of a cultural geography text (such as might be used in the schools of the target culture) describing the members of his own culture. To the degree that his exposition resembles a typical example of such texts, he would be said to be knowledgeable in this area.

5. Attitudes toward industrialization, pollution, the space race, military posture, foreign policy. These are matters of concern in practically every contemporary society--the exigencies of our world almost force a commitment to some position or other. Has industrial self-sufficiency been adopted as a national policy? How many people belong to anti-pollution and conservation organizations? How frequent are suggestions in the public press that the nation should back up with military power its "just claims" in areas of disagreement with other countries? The target-culture equivalent of the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature could provide the criterion against which to judge students' answers to questions like these.

6. The effect of modern science on daily thinking about contemporary problems. There are two principal ways in which these effects can be manifested. One is through calls in the public press for turning to science and scientists for the solution of such problems; the second is through counselling the use of the scientific method (by non-scientists) in attacking the problems. The greater the incidence of either of these suggestions, the more profound the effect. The student should be able to predict, then, the probability with which any of a group of influential publications will make such suggestions in regard to a particular problem facing the society. He should also be able to characterize alternative approaches in some systematic way, especially if they are more frequent than either of the two mentioned above.

7. Folklore of the target culture. If one truly has a "feel" for a culture, he will know the myths, traditions, legends, customs and beliefs that are widely held among the common people. He will not only know them, but he will know typical examples of how they are manifested in daily life. Every culture has its equivalent of stories like "Alice in Wonderland" and "Paul Bunyan", and parallels to the tradition of gainful employment in the United States and of fair play in England.

8. Festivals, holidays and their meaning. Holidays and how they are celebrated are important to an understanding of a culture, often because of their historical significance. The student should know the central themes of the celebrations, both "official", as reflected in public statements by important people like government and church leaders, and "common", as shown by the activities in which the average man engages. The test item(s) presented to the student will require him to demonstrate that he knows these things in some other than a regurgitative sense.

9. Historical traditions and events commonly referred to. Cultures differ rather strikingly in the degree to which their histories and traditions live in the daily thinking of their members. However, to the extent that these traditions are active for the natives of the target culture, they should be reflected in statements by a student who would be seen as sympatico. An interesting way of testing this capacity suggests itself. Some widely-known, current event may be taken as a topic, such as the most recent meeting of the Paris peace conference on Vietnam, or a landing on the moon, or the Jarring peace mission to the Middle East, or the accession to power of the new Marxist government in Chile. The student could be assigned the task of anticipating the editorial comment on the event by a specific periodical which is published in the target country, but in the student's native language. His production would be compared with the editorial, when it does appear, with regard to the kinds of historical references that are made, and the kinds of interpretations that are placed upon them. Another, somewhat different, way of evaluating the student's sensitivity to the ways of thinking of the target culture is to have him write an editorial-type essay on any topic that, in his estimation, was important enough to elicit the attention of the leading national periodicals in the target country. Reference to a periodical index would determine whether he had chosen correctly, and analysis of the actual articles on the topic would show whether he had portrayed the proper mores, values, beliefs and national goals.

If a student performs well on items from all three classes, in each case using the judgments of natives of the target culture, or items in the public press as criteria, it would seem fair to say that he can indeed see the world from an entirely different cultural viewpoint.

Summary and concluding comments

In this paper, I have presented the general outline of a test which would indicate the degree to which a college student who was a monolingual member of a particular culture has developed an understanding and empathy for another culture. Using the intuitive judgments of bilingual members of the target culture as the general criterion, three classes of test items were suggested. Class A items were designed to measure the student's knowledge of how to conduct oneself in several, everyday situations common to the target culture. Class B items probe the student's understanding of general patterns of social interaction that are common to many situations, such as showing respect or displaying competitiveness. And Class C items test how successful the student is in at least temporarily adopting the world-view of the target culture. Since the test is conducted in the student's native language, there is no necessity for second language competence. Because of this feature, the test could be used to evaluate an important, desired outcome of current second language instruction in a far more systematic and comprehensive way than is presently the case or it could be used directly to measure the achievement of one of the goals of a liberal education--the ability to see the world through the eyes of people who significantly differ from oneself.

In building such a test, the use of bilingual target-culture natives as informant-judges insures the validity of the test, and the assignment (by these judges) of student responses to internally consistent categories will ultimately make it possible for any intelligent native speaker of the student's language to score the test. It is acknowledged that the true test of a student's acculturation is his ability to behave properly in typical situations in authentic target-culture settings. The present instrument tests acculturation at a somewhat lower level of sophistication--the level at which the student is simply expected to be able to describe the proper behavior. The rather unconventional form of the suggested test items will still permit group testing, which would not be the case were the student required to act out his role. So what is lost in authenticity is gained in efficiency. First attempts to develop such a test should probably begin with one or two items of each of the three classes that have been identified; these could then be tried out on the two components of the standardizing population, students with no previous contact with the target culture and native members of that culture, to determine whether consistent differences can be found. After that, the whole battery could be developed.

If a test like the one suggested were constructed, it might encourage progressive-minded educators to initiate "foreign culture" courses in which cultures would be studied directly, on one's native language. There seems to be no intrinsic reason why this could not be done, but perhaps because of the inter-disciplinary nature of such an enterprise, they have not yet seen the light of day. One must be mindful of the assertion that it is ultimately impossible fully to understand a culture

without some fair degree of mastery of its language. There have been no systematic tests of such an assertion, but it may well be true. Assuming that it is, specially prepared reading materials could be developed, in which first the general patterns, then the less-extended constructions and morphological variations, and finally the lexicon of the language of the target culture would be gradually introduced in increasing amounts into discourse cast (originally) in the students' native language. This is the essence of a proposal recently made by Burling (Burling, Robbins. Some outlandish proposals for the teaching of foreign languages. Language Learning, 1968, 18, 61-75). It is entirely possible that this device, coupled with the availability to the student of interesting material that is cast on an adult level, will indeed constitute a powerful motivation to the students to want to learn a second language, not as an end in itself, but rather as a tool for understanding how others see the world.

Footnote

[1]The work reported herein was supported in part pursuant to Contract OEC-0-9-097740-3743(014) with the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, under the provisions of P. L. 83-531, Cooperative Research, and the provisions of Title VI, P. L. 85-864, as amended.